

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS MANILA 002969

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP/PMBS, INR/EAP, S/CT
NSC FOR GREEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: SEVEN ABU SAYYAF MEMBERS SENTENCED TO DEATH

REF: 04 MANILA 3942

1. (U) This message is Sensitive But Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

2. (SBU) Seven members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), a US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) since 1997, received death sentences on June 22 from the Basilan District Court for their role in the 2001 kidnapping and subsequent murder of 12 hostages. Six of the convicted were present in the court and one was sentenced in absentia. The convicted will now face death by lethal injection and the court also ordered them to pay the families of the victims 200,000 pesos (US\$ 3,600). State Prosecutor Ricardo Cabaron told the media the GRP "applied the full force of the law," and that the "agony of the victims families was finally relieved." (Note. In August 2004, a lower court sentenced 17 ASG members to death for their roles in the June 2001 Lamitan Hospital siege and the May 2001 kidnapping of several Filipino citizens and three AMCIITs from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan (reftel). Death sentences are automatically reviewed by the Supreme Court, requiring a majority concurrence of its 15 justices. End Note.)

The ASG: Brutal Is Putting It Lightly

3. (SBU) According to press accounts, the convicted ASG members are: Ibrahim Bowak, Muddas Sabinul, Abdulla Uwa, Daud Indaling, Janital Wahid, Jimmy Teng, and Etang Awal. Awal remains at-large and was sentenced in absentia. The bandits raided a village near Lamitan Town in August 2001, seizing about 40 people including women and children. Before returning to the jungle they beheaded nine captives and shot another. One of the women captives was reportedly raped. The ASG gunmen also raided a farm near Lantawan Municipality, torching 10 houses and a church, and beheading two of 15 captives, according to press reports of the trial proceedings. The ASG was also implicated in the kidnapping of 21 mostly Asian and European tourists from the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan in April 2000.

Comment: A Win For The Mixed Judicial Record

4. (SBU) The convicted were found guilty of particularly brutal acts, reinforcing in the public mind the ASG's reputation for indiscriminate terrorism. While Philippine justice is at times ineffective and slow, these convictions represent a significant and commendable step forward in efforts to bring the ASG to justice. End Comment.

MUSSOMELI